WABASCA-DESMARAIS

AREA STRUCTURE PLAN REPORT

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The Area Structure Plan was recommended for approval by the Improvement District No. 17 (E) North Advisory Council on February 10. 1986. and was adopted by Julian G.J. Koziak. Minister of Municipal Affairs on March 21. 1986.

The Planning Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs would like to thank the members of the Community Planning Committee for their participation and involvement in the project.

COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Wabasca-Desmarais is a hamlet of about 1000 persons located 120 Km north east of Slave Lake in Improvement District 17E. An additional estimated 1000 persons reside in the surrounding reserves of the Big Stone Band. There is a demand for additional residential lots and a central location for community and business services. Experimental heavy oil plants have generated some demand for industrial sites in the hamlet.

In the summer of 1984, Improvement District 17E Administration requested the assistance of the Planning Branch in preparing a plan for Wabasca-Desmarais. The principal concerns were:

(i) to identify suitable areas for expansion of residential, commercial and industrial uses to meet the demands of a naturally growing population and anticipated "spin-offs" from the Gulf Oil Plant;

(ii) to plan in sufficient detail such that a clear staging and mix of land uses would be identified as a basis for reviewing development proposals and miscellaneous lease applications; and,

(iii) to develop the plan with the community in such a way that the community would understand and support the planning proposals.

1.2 Approach

Information was gathered on existing land uses, current proposals, groundwater, soil conditions and utility plans from which a concept map of future development was prepared. A meeting was called in the community to outline the need for planning. From the thirty or so people at this meeting, a committee of six was nominated. Subsequently, participation was secured from Gulf Oil and the Big Stone Band.

In a series of meetings over the winter of 1984-85 the concept map of future development was amended. Policies and actions were also identified. Subsequent community meetings were held in the spring of 1985 which set about re-thinking the concept and preparing a new plan and policies. These are now being presented.

1.3 Contents

This planning document is comprised of:

(i) an introductory statement
(ii) policy statements with an explanation
(iii) a map showing conceptual designs

This planning document is support information of the formal plan which will consist only of the map and policy statements. This final plan will be signed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in accordance with the Area Structure Plan provisions of the Planning Act.

2.0 WABASCA-DESMARAIS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN: POLICIES

2.0.a LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY:

The land use and staging of development shall be as shown on this map. Where the Land Use Order grants discretionary authority to the development officer and or municipal planning commission, discretion shall be exercised consistent with this plan.

EXPLANATION

Work has proceeded to the point of subdivision approval and site clearance of the large stage 1 residential area. Development of the smaller infill areas could proceed with a minimum of road construction. Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5 represent the community's preferences and are reasonable extensions of preceeding development. Areas for which no use is shown are generally unsuitable for development because of soil structure and surface water or high groundwater.

The current Land Use Order allows for considerable discretionary authority. While this is desirable, some greater direction in the exercise of this discretion as provided by this plan is appropriate.

2.0.b MOBILE HOME DEVELOPMENT POLICY:

When lots become available in the mobile home areas shown on the plan then mobile homes shall be discouraged from locating in other than those areas.

EXPLANATION

The majority of mobile homes have been located in the community through the emergency shelter program. The Committee believes that in most cases "stick built" homes could just as easily have been built. Furthermore, initial capital savings are out-weighed by the higher operating costs of mobile homes. The Committee recognizes a legitimate role for mobile homes but prefers to see them located in certain areas of the community and not spread throughout.

2.0.c RECREATION POLICY:

The development of recreation trails to link major recreation areas should be encouraged.

2.0.d GENERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY:

Development shall be in a manner which respects the natural setting, view of the lake and existing development to promote a positive image for Wabasca-Desmarais.

EXPLANATION

The Land Use Order is the principle instrument to achieve this end. Following are some specific suggestions regarding the administration of the Land Use Order:

(i) the use of local building materials and compatible design treatment of development should be encouraged: and

(ii) home occupations. where approved. should be conditional on adherence to performance requirements respecting outdoor storage and activities which would be set out in the development permit.

Detailed suggestions are made in respect of the Special Areas identified on the Area Structure Plan as follows:

SPECIAL AREA 1

This area is a focus for Desmarais and development should preserve the excellent views of the lake:

(i) lots 22 and 25 may be considered for mixed commercial and higher density residential development (eg. hotel. restaurant. retail mall. apartments) to provide a "commercial focus" in Desmarais;

(ii) expansion of institutional uses and residential development adjacent to the lake may be considered;

(iii) development shall not exceed three storeys in height; siting and building mass shall respect the views of the lake; and

(iv) special emphasis shall be given to quality exterior finishes.

SPECIAL AREA 2

This area is the entrance to and gives the first impression of Wabasca-Desmarais. Development should reflect the importance of this location:

(i) commercial uses serving the travelling public shall be encouraged to locate buildings to the front and parking to the rear of the lot;

(ii) the existing gravel stock pile and cement plant shall be encouraged to relocate to the industrial area; and

(iii) suitable landscaping and design themes should be employed where possible.

SPECIAL AREA 3

This area is the older core of Wabasca and development should complement the residential and public institutional focus of the area while protecting important views of the lake:

(i) development of new commercial uses or the expansion of existing commercial uses onto adjacent lots may be permitted;

(ii) higher density housing may be permitted on higher elevations providing views of the lake from existing developments are not affected; and,

(iii) trailers shall not be permitted on the small lots adjacent to and to the south of the Neewatim Elders home.

SPECIAL AREA 4

This area includes the small sandy beach at the northwest corner of the hamlet plus the Crown land between the roads and North Wabasca Lake. The area should be developed for swimming. picnic and canoeing opportunities for the convenience of local residents.

SPECIAL AREA 5

This area is intended as a long term major commercial focus of the community. Development should be of high quality to reflect the importance of this area in the future.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Wabasca-Desmarais Area Stucture Plan shall be implemented through:

(i) the Land Use Order:

(ii) I.D. 17E Administration and Council: and.

(iii) consideration by the I.D. 17E Council of policy and action proposals to implement the plan as may be brought forward by the community.

MAPS NOT

FILMED

CARTES

OMISES